

For more information, contact:  
Matt Guilford  
Brand Manager - Meridian Yachts  
matt.guilford@meridian-yachts.com  
p. 865.971.6313/f. 865.971.6434

## **Meridian Yachts extends leadership position; launches new Web site and magazine**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

---

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Aug. 18, 2009 – In times of turmoil, people tend to seek out solace and strength. Perhaps that accounts for the phenomenal rise of Meridian Yachts in 2008 and 2009. Whether boaters are drawn to the comforting refuge offered by Meridian Yachts' vessels, or Meridian's relative strength within the marine market, there's no doubt that Meridian Yachts has emerged as the "go-to" bridge boat brand during one of the most tumultuous periods in modern marine history.

#### **Manufacturing site moved to Palm Coast**

In a positive sign for both current and prospective Meridian Yachts owners, Meridian's parent company, Brunswick Corporation, made a decision at the height of the recession (Q4, 2008) to make a significant investment in the brand by relocating all manufacturing operations from Seattle, Wash., to an existing facility in Palm Coast, Fla. The Florida facility, which has been in operation for almost 25 years building Sea Ray Sport Yachts and Yachts, provides Meridian with a much improved work-flow, direct water access for testing and delivery, and closer proximity to international shipping ports for Meridian's expanding global consumer base.

Migrating production required some time, as tooling was moved from one corner of the country to the other. However, Meridian had built a reserve inventory of boats to sell to dealers during this manufacturing downtime. Encouragingly, the reserve has dwindled quicker than initially expected, setting the stage for strong manufacturing operations as boat models come back online in the Palm Coast facility. The first few Meridian boats produced in the Palm Coast facility – all 391 Sedans – have been completed and shipped to dealers.

#### **Wholesale Movement Spurred by Retail Activity**

Meridian's successful shipments to dealers have been a direct result of positive retail activity. In fact, Meridian Yachts is outpacing the overall marine market by a wide margin. The difference is clearly reflected in Meridian's market share, where Meridian is both the best-selling *and* fastest growing brand of bridge boats in the USA. (Statistical Surveys Incorporated [SSI], 16-99 feet, all craft types) While the brand's best-selling status was attained in 2008, as Meridian concluded the year with more than a 10 percent lead in market share over non-Brunswick bridge boat brands, and the gap has only widened in 2009. As evidence, Meridian Yachts sold *four times* more bridge boats than their nearest non-Brunswick competitor in the first quarter of 2009 according to state boating registrations (SSI, inboard bridge boats, 34-60 feet, Jan-Mar 2009).

## **New Product**

Meridian's leadership has always been driven and defined by the products brought to market. By that measure, the 2010 model year is exceptionally promising for Meridian Yachts, with the planned introduction of the new 541 Sedan flagship. The 541 features knockout lines along with a host of industry firsts, including the industry's first bridge boat with twin 600hp Zeus pods standard. The 541 is on-track to debut at the 2010 Miami International Boat Show.

With a length overall of 53 feet, 10 inches and a 15-foot, 6-inch beam, the 541 will be Meridian's largest Sedan offering ever. The boat features a three stateroom, two head layout, including a full-beam master stateroom. The 541 Sedan will offer a comprehensive list of standard features and select options to accommodate regional preferences (optional bridge hardtop, hydraulic swim platform, lower helm, crews quarters and more.)

## **Connecting with Customers**

Meridian is using more avenues than ever to connect with customers. Meridian's Facebook page and Twitter presence have been wildly popular this summer, with the brand's Facebook audience growing large enough to earn a custom URL ([facebook.com/meridianyachts](http://facebook.com/meridianyachts)). The Facebook page – which provides a two-way communication channel on new products, contests, previews, etc. – is accessible to all Internet users, not just those with a Facebook profile.

Beyond Meridian's burgeoning social media presence, the brand is also launching two more traditional communications vehicles this summer: a brand new Web site will launch in mid-August, while a new semi-annual lifestyle publication, *Meridian Lines*, will go to print in mid-September. Both initiatives are designed to expand beyond the conventional marine offering of product-specific information alone, to include lifestyle information appealing to all boating enthusiasts, whether they're actively looking for a new boat or not.

Finally, the brand's primary connection with customers is through Meridian's best-in-class dealer network. The network of authorized Meridian dealers expanded recently with the signing of new dealers in southwest Tennessee, New Orleans and Baltimore/Annapolis. These newest dealership locations join Meridian's esteemed existing dealer network, which played the principal role in Meridian's recent award for Customer Satisfaction from the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

## **This Program Was Made Possible By...**

Each of these successes above was made possible only with strong support from the Brunswick Boat Group and Brunswick Corporation. Brunswick placed a major vote of confidence in Meridian in late 2008, when the brand was moved to the highly successful Sea Ray Group business unit. In the past, the Sea Ray Group has included notable brands like Sea Ray, Boston Whaler and Baja. Meridian's integration into the Sea Ray Group business unit allows for synergy with some of the best customer service, financial and back-end processes in the industry, while maintaining a unique identity in the marine market.

Both Meridian Yachts and Sea Ray Group are made stronger by the backing of *Fortune 500* parent company Brunswick Corporation. The leadership team at Brunswick has guided the company to a solid liquidity position that is unequalled in the marine industry and maneuvered the company for a healthy and viable outlook. Further, Brunswick Acceptance, a joint venture with GE Finance, provides wholesale financing that has become the envy of the industry, as Brunswick's dealers enjoy access to increasingly scarce operating capital. The financial resources of Brunswick Corporation provide a direct benefit to Meridian Yachts, Meridian Yachts dealers and, ultimately, Meridian's customers.

## Summary

While uncertainty still exists within and beyond the marine industry, Meridian Yachts continues to forge ahead. New facilities, new models, new dealers and new ways of connecting with customers are each helping to strengthen and ensure the future success of Meridian Yachts. Meridian's financial support from Brunswick Corporation and positioning within the Sea Ray Group business unit provide the ongoing resources to continue the brand's positive trajectory.

Sincerely,



Robert Parmentier  
Executive Vice President, Sea Ray Group

###

## About Meridian Yachts

Headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., Meridian Yachts is America's leading builder of bridge boats. Models are available in Sedan, Aft Cabin Motoryacht and Pilothouse configurations, ranging from 34 through 60 feet. The company is part of the Sea Ray Group operating unit within the Brunswick Boat Group.

## About Brunswick

Headquartered in Lake Forest, Ill., Brunswick Corporation endeavors to instill "Genuine Ingenuity"(TM) in all its leading consumer brands, including Mercury and Mariner outboard engines; Mercury MerCruiser sterndrives and inboard engines; MotorGuide trolling motors; Attwood marine parts and accessories; Land 'N' Sea, Kellogg Marine, Diversified Marine and Benrock parts and accessories distributors; Arvor, Bayliner, Bermuda, Boston Whaler, Cabo Yachts, Crestliner, Cypress Cay, Harris, Hatteras, Kayot, Lowe, Lund, Maxum, Meridian, Ornvik, Princecraft, Quicksilver, Rayglass, Sea Ray, Sealine, Triton, Trophy, Uttern and Valiant boats; Life Fitness and Hammer Strength fitness equipment; Brunswick bowling centers, equipment and consumer products; Brunswick billiards tables and foosball tables. For more information, visit <http://www.brunswick.com>.